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# X-FACTOR



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YARDIN  
Sonia

WHEN SUPERHUMANITY NEEDS A DETECTIVE AGENCY, THEY CALL UPON MADROX THE  
MULTIPLE MAN AND HIS MUTANT TEAM OF INVESTIGATORS...

# X-FACTOR



## PREVIOUSLY...

OUR WHOLE UNIVERSE WAS IN A HOT DENSE STATE. THEN NEARLY FOURTEEN BILLION YEARS AGO EXPANSION STARTED. WAIT...TOO FAR BACK. LAST ISSUE (MUCH BETTER) X-FACTOR WENT HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH HELA, NORSE GODDESS OF THE UNDERWORLD, AND HER FORCES IN ORDER TO FREE THAT COSMIC TELEPORTING FUN-LOVER, PIP THE TROLL, FROM HER CLUTCHES. EVENTS CULMINATED IN A THROWDOWN BETWEEN HELA AND DARWIN IN WHICH HIS ASTOUNDING EVOLUTIONARY POWERS ENABLED HIM TO SURVIVE, BUT POSSIBLY AT GREAT PERSONAL COST. ALSO IN THE COURSE OF BATTLE, AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE ASGARDIAN WOLF-PRINCE HRIMHARI REVEALED TO SHATTERSTAR THAT HRIMHARI IS THE TRUE FATHER OF RAHNE'S CHILD. MEANWHILE, BACK IN NEW YORK, AN ODD VISIT TO THE DOCTOR HAS CAUSED RICTOR TO START TO FIGURE OUT FOR HIMSELF THAT RAHNE'S BABY MAY WELL BE MORE THAN IT APPEARS TO BE...

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# KEEPING THINGS

YOU PLAY THE HAND  
YOU'RE DEALT. THAT'S THE  
FIRST RULE OF NOIR.

HELL, IT'S  
THE FIRST RULE  
OF LIFE.

















UHM...

I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ME TO SAY HERE, DARWIN.



IT WAS YOUR PLAN, TO HAVE ME SQUARE OFF AGAINST HELA! AGAINST A DEATH GODDESS, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!

"PLAN" MIGHT NOT BE THE RIGHT WORD. I CAME UP WITH IT ON THE FLY WHILE WE WERE, Y'KNOW, FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES.

BUT I FIGURED, HEY, WHATEVER EFFECTS THAT MIGHT HAVE WOULD BE TEMPORARY!

YOU'D EVOLVE AND THEN SHAKE IT OFF LIKE ALWAYS!



YEAH, WELL...

YOU FIGURED WRONG.

'CAUSE IN REAL LIFE, EVOLUTION IS A ONE-WAY STREET, AND SOME THINGS YOU DON'T SHAKE OFF.



OR SOMETIMES IT JUST TAKES LONGER.

MAYBE. BUT UNTIL I KNOW, I NEED SOME TIME TO MYSELF.

WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOU HERE! WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS! WE CAN HELP--



YOU'D THINK A GUY LIKE YOU, WHO HAS TROUBLE MAKING DECISIONS...

...WOULD REALIZE WHEN HE'S NOT BEING GIVEN A CHOICE.





I'M NOT MAD  
AT YOU, JAMIE.  
YOU MADE THE CALL,  
I EXECUTED IT, AND  
THAT'S THE WAY  
THAT GOES.

BUT, TRUST  
ME, YOU DON'T  
WANT TO BE  
AROUND ME  
RIGHT NOW.



HELL, I  
DON'T WANT TO  
BE AROUND ME. BUT  
I GOT NO OTHER  
OPTIONS.

YOU  
DO.

C'MON,  
DARWIN. WE'RE  
YOUR FRIENDS--



FRIENDS  
RESPECT  
OTHER FRIENDS'  
WISHES.

DON'T  
WORRY ABOUT  
ME. I'LL  
SURVIVE.

IT'S WHAT  
I DO.



"YOU LET HIM GO?  
MADROX, ARE YOU  
KIDDING ME?"

"NO."



"ARE YOU  
KIDDING ME?"

"STILL NO."



MADROX,  
HOW COULD  
YOU--?

BECAUSE  
WE'RE NOT A  
CHAIN GANG, TERRY.  
PEOPLE CAN COME  
AND GO AS THEY  
PLEASE.

THIS ISN'T  
LIKE LEAVING A  
WOUNDED SOLDIER  
ON THE FIELD. IF  
DARWIN WANTS OUT,  
WE HAVE TO RESPECT  
THAT AND HOPE HE  
COMES BACK.

BUT HE'S  
HURTING  
INSIDE!



WHO ISN'T?  
OH, BUT YOU  
WOULDN'T KNOW  
ABOUT NEEDING TO  
BE ALONE FOR  
A WHILE, RIGHT,  
THERESA?



NO ONE  
ASKED YOU,  
LAYLA.



IT'S  
JUST...  
IT'S NOT  
RIGHT.

WHAT  
WOULD  
YOU HAVE  
SAID?

THAT WE'RE  
HIS FRIENDS!  
WE WANT TO  
HELP!



I TRIED  
THAT! WHAT  
ELSE YOU  
GOT?

I...I  
DON'T KNOW!  
SOMETHING--!

LIKE  
WHAT? LIKE  
WHAT?

C'MON,  
TERRY!  
ENLIGHTEN  
ME!







I...REALLY  
THOUGHT WE'D  
SEEN THE LAST  
OF YOU.



WHAT, YA THINK I'M  
THAT MUCH OF AN  
INGRATE, THAT I'D  
JUST TAKE OFF?

IS THAT  
WHATT'CHA ALL  
THINK O' ME?



WELL...  
YEAH.

MORE  
OR LESS.

PRETTY  
MUCH.

I'M  
RESERVING  
JUDGMENT.



I'M HURT.  
I'M TRULY  
HURT.



FACT OF THE MATTER IS,  
I WUZ ROYALTY ONCE,  
I STILL GOT SOME WHATTAYA  
CALL IT, HONOR.

LIKE IT OR  
NOT, I OWE YOU  
GUYS. YA GOT ME  
OUTTA A JAM WITH  
TALL GREEN AND  
DAMNED AND I  
GOTTA SETTLE  
THAT SCORE.

REALLY.



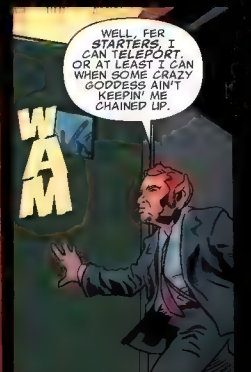
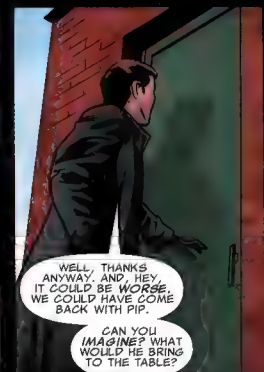
UH-HUH.

TELL YOU  
WHAT: STEP OUT  
INTO THE HALL-WAY, AND  
I'LL CONFER WITH MY  
ASSOCIATES. OKAY?

SURE  
THING.









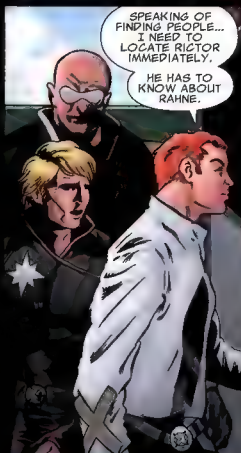


AND I'M GOOD AT FINDIN' PEOPLE.

WHAT PEOPLE?

ANY PEOPLE GOT A KNACK FER IT.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I USED T'BE KIND A COSMIC. SOME O' THAT STUFF STAYS WITH YA.



SPEAKING OF FINDING PEOPLE... I NEED TO LOCATE RICTOR IMMEDIATELY.

HE HAS TO KNOW ABOUT RAHNE.



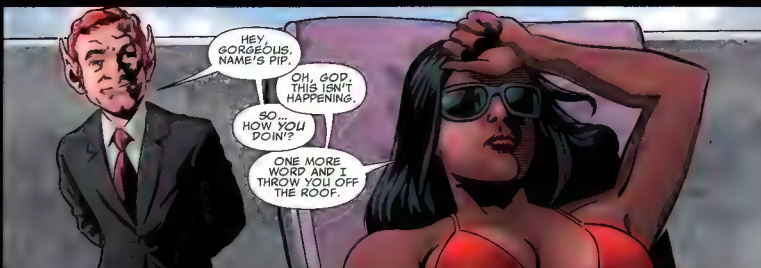
IT'S GOING TO RAIN? BUT IT LOOKS PERFECTLY FINE OUT.



YOU ARE SO FREAKIN' CLUELESS SOMETIMES, IT'S EMBARRASSIN'.



WELL, HELLOOOOOO NURSE!



HEY, GORGEOUS. NAME'S PIP.

OH, GOD. THIS ISN'T HAPPENING.

SO... HOW YOU DOIN'?

ONE MORE WORD AND I THROW YOU OFF THE ROOF.



RICTOR!  
WE NEED TO  
TALK!  
ARE YOU  
HERE?



IF I  
WEREN'T HERE,  
HOW WOULD I  
RESPOND?



RICTOR?

WHOA. HOW  
MUCH HAVE YOU  
HAD TO DRINK?

WHAT  
THE HELL  
HAPPENED?

NOT  
ENOUGH,  
I CAN TELL  
YOU THAT.



THE DOCTOR...  
SHE SAID THE BABY'S  
ALL "MYSTICAL."

DO I LOOK  
MYSTICAL TO  
YOU?

YOU  
LOOK WASTED  
TO ME.

GOOD  
CALL.



GOOD LORD,  
DID A DISTILLERY  
BLOW UP?

JUST MY  
BREATHING THE  
AIR IN HERE MIGHT  
COUNT AS  
FALLING OFF THE  
WAGON.



WHERE'S RAHNE?

DUNNO. SHE CLAMMED UP AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE, WOULDN'T TALK.

WE WENT OUT, I FLAGGED A CAB, TURNED AROUND, SHE WAS GONE.



RICTOR... YOU'RE OFF THE HOOK.

OH?

YOU'RE NOT THE FATHER OF HER BABY.

I WAS KIND OF FIGURIN' THAT.



YEAH, IT'S SOME GUY NAMED HUMMINAH HUMMINAH.

I THOUGHT IT WAS HAIRY HARRY.



IT'S HRIMHARI, YOU BOZOS.



WASN'T HE, LIKE... A WOLF GOD OR SOMETHING?

RIGHT, SO DON'T FEEL BAD. SHE DUMPED YOU FOR A GOD. GODS ARE PRETTY BRUTAL COMPETITION.

I BET SHATTERSTAR WOULD DUMP YOU FOR A GOD. THE WAY HE WAS LOOKING AT THOR...



WHAT? DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?

PICK ANYTHING.



LOOK, BOTTOM LINE IS... TO HELL WITH HER, SHE LIED TO ME.

NO, SHE DIDN'T.



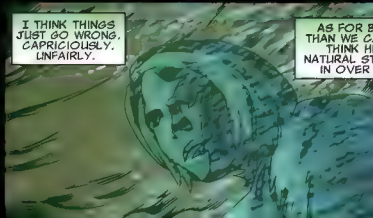




THEY SAY THAT GOD  
NEVER GIVES YOU MORE  
THAN YOU CAN HANDLE.

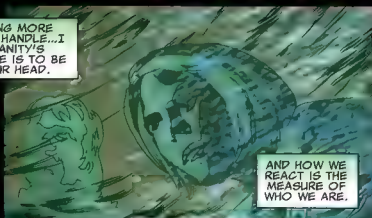
FUNNY HOW THAT ALWAYS REFERS  
TO PROBLEMS. WHY DOESN'T  
GOD EVER GIVE US MORE  
HAPPINESS THAN WE CAN HANDLE?

PERSONALLY, I DON'T  
THINK GOD DOLES OUT  
CAREFULLY MEASURED  
PROBLEMS AS TESTS.



I THINK THINGS  
JUST GO WRONG,  
CAPRICIOUSLY,  
UNFAIRLY.

AS FOR BEING MORE  
THAN WE CAN HANDLE...I  
THINK HUMANITY'S  
NATURAL STATE IS TO BE  
IN OVER OUR HEAD.



AND HOW WE  
REACT IS THE  
MEASURE OF  
WHO WE ARE.



**RICTOR!**



COULD YOU,  
LIKE...NOT  
SHOUT MY  
NAME?

ARE  
YE...HUNG  
OVER?

WORKIN'  
ON IT.



HOW  
DID YE FIND  
ME?

THROUGH  
A TROLL.

SOME  
IDIOT ON THE  
INTERNET...?

NOT  
THAT KIND OF...  
NEVERMIND.



LOOK, RICKTOR,  
AH MADE A MISTAKE  
COMIN' BACK, ALL  
RIGHT? AH ADMIT IT.  
SO JUST FERGIT  
THAT I EVER--



I KNOW  
ABOUT  
HRIMHARI.



YE MUST  
THINK AH'M  
A TERRIBLE  
PERSON.

I DUNNO  
WHAT I THINK  
RIGHT NOW.

I MEAN...  
WERE YOU WITH  
HIM...AT THE SAME  
TIME THAT WE  
WERE--?



NO. LONG  
AFTER.

BUT HE'S  
PART WOLF, AND  
AH'M PART WOLF,  
AND A WOLF'S  
GESTATION PERIOD  
IS ABOUT TWO  
MONTHS, NOT  
NINE, SO...



...SO THIS IS  
HAPPENING A LOT  
FASTER THAN A  
NORMAL HUMAN  
PREGNANCY.

AND YOU  
DECIDED TO  
MAKE ME THINK  
I WAS THE--?

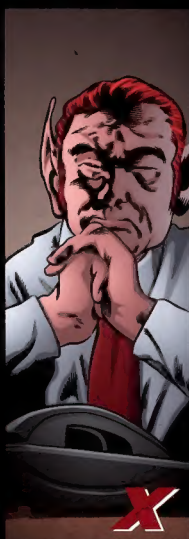
JUST A  
TOUCH,  
AYE.

NO. AH  
SWEAR, AH  
NEVER PLANNED  
THAT. IT'S  
JUST...

JUST  
WHAT?







# NEXT

